

# Meat Buying "Know-How"

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Meat, fish, or poultry, which provide the "main dish" for most American meals, are more costly than most other items on the menu. In fact, the latest United States Department of Agriculture figures show that more than one-third of the family food budget goes for foods from this group.

There are enough different cuts and varieties of meat available in our country to permit a homemaker to serve a different one each day for a year. Thus, it is not too surprising that some homemakers feel slightly uneasy at the meat case and not entirely sure that they are getting the most for their money.

Whether a cut of meat is an economical choice for a family depends on the amount of cooked lean meat it will provide as well as the cost per pound and the cost per serving. Frequently, the cut with the lowest price per pound is not the best buy either in food value or in the number of servings it will yield. A boneless roast or ham at a higher price per pound may be a better choice than a low-priced cut that has a lot of gristle, bone, or fat.

## How Much To Buy

Each shopper needs to be able to estimate accurately how much meat, fish or poultry her family will eat. For example, she may have a child whose favorite food is drumsticks and another whose favorite is hamburgers. When she plans meals around these items, she will probably want to allow for extra servings.

Besides allowing for individual preferences, this type of planning is beneficial because it helps to eliminate problems with leftovers which may go to waste--and can be a means for using "planned overs".

Two to three ounces of cooked lean meat is considered by nutritionists to be one standard size serving, but most American families serve portions larger than three ounces since meat is one of our most popular foods.

Depending on the kind and cut, a pound of meat will provide one or more three ounce servings. A good rule of thumb is:

Bony Meat .....	1 to 2 Servings Per Pound
Moderate Bone .....	2 to 3 Servings Per Pound
Little Bone .....	3 to 4 Servings Per Pound
No Bone .....	4 to 5 Servings Per Pound

*Cost of a 3-ounce serving of cooked lean meat at specified  
retail prices per pound*

Kind and cut of meat	Price per pound of														
	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	105	
BEEF															
Cost of a 3-ounce															
Roasts:															
Brisket, bone in.....	21	23	26	29	31	34	36	39	42	44	47	49	52	55	
Chuck, bone in.....	18	20	22	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	45	47	
Chuck, bone out.....	14	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	28	30	31	33	35	36	
Ribs-7th, bone in.....	18	20	22	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	45	47	
Round, bone in.....	13	15	17	18	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	32	33	35	
Round, bone out.....	12	14	16	17	19	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	31	33	
Rump, bone in.....	17	20	22	24	26	28	31	33	35	37	39	41	44	46	
Rump, bone out.....	14	15	17	19	20	22	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	
Steaks:															
Chuck, bone in.....	18	20	22	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	45	47	
Chuck, bone out.....	14	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	28	30	31	33	35	36	
Club, bone in.....	23	26	28	31	34	37	40	43	45	48	51	54	57	60	
Porterhouse, bone in.....	21	23	26	29	31	34	36	39	42	44	47	49	52	55	
Round, bone in.....	13	15	17	18	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	32	33	35	
Round, bone out.....	12	14	16	17	19	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	31	33	
Sirloin, bone in.....	17	19	21	23	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	43	45	
Sirloin, bone out.....	16	18	20	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	
T-bone, bone in.....	22	25	28	30	33	36	39	41	44	47	50	52	55	58	
Ground beef, lean.....	10	12	13	14	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	25	26	27	
Short ribs.....	23	26	29	32	35	38	41	44	47	50	53	56	58	61	
PORK, FRESH															
Roasts:															
Loin, bone in.....	20	23	25	28	30	33	36	38	41	43	46	48	51	53	
Loin, bone out.....	14	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	28	30	31	33	35	36	
Picnic, bone in.....	21	24	27	29	32	35	37	40	43	45	48	51	53	56	
Chops:															
Loin.....	18	20	22	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	45	47	
Rib.....	20	23	25	28	30	33	36	38	41	43	46	48	51	53	
PORK, CURED															
Roasts:															
Butt, bone in.....	14	16	18	20	22	23	25	27	29	31	32	34	36	38	
Ham, bone in.....	14	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	28	30	31	33	35	36	
Ham, bone out.....	10	12	13	14	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	25	26	27	
Picnic, bone in.....	18	21	23	25	27	30	32	34	37	39	41	43	46	48	
Picnic, bone out.....	14	16	18	19	21	23	25	27	28	30	32	34	35	37	
Ham slices.....	12	14	16	17	19	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	31	33	
LAMB															
Roasts:															
Leg, bone in.....	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	38	40	42	44	
Shoulder, bone in.....	18	21	23	25	27	30	32	34	37	39	41	43	46	48	
Chops:															
Loin.....	18	21	23	25	27	30	32	34	37	39	41	43	46	48	
Rib.....	22	25	28	30	33	36	39	41	44	47	50	52	55	58	

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Price per pound of retail cuts (cents)																				
80	85	90	95	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180
Cost of a 3-ounce serving (cents)																				
42	44	47	49	52	55	57	60	62	65	68	70	73	76	78	81	83	86	89	91	94
36	38	40	42	45	47	49	51	54	56	58	60	62	65	67	69	71	74	76	78	80
28	30	31	33	35	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	50	52	54	56	57	59	61	62
36	38	40	42	45	47	49	51	54	56	58	60	62	65	67	69	71	74	76	78	80
27	28	30	32	33	35	37	38	40	42	43	45	47	48	50	52	54	55	57	59	60
25	27	28	30	31	33	34	36	38	39	41	42	44	45	47	48	50	52	53	55	56
35	37	39	41	44	46	48	50	52	55	57	59	61	63	66	68	70	72	74	76	79
27	29	31	32	34	36	38	39	41	43	44	46	48	49	51	53	55	56	58	60	61
36	38	40	42	45	47	49	51	54	56	58	60	62	65	67	69	71	74	76	78	80
28	30	31	33	35	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	50	52	54	56	57	59	61	62
45	48	51	54	57	60	62	65	68	71	74	77	80	82	85	88	91	94	97	99	102
42	44	47	49	52	55	57	60	62	65	68	70	73	76	78	81	83	86	89	91	94
27	28	30	32	33	35	37	38	40	42	43	45	47	48	50	52	54	55	57	59	60
25	27	28	30	31	33	34	36	38	39	41	42	44	45	47	48	50	52	53	55	56
34	36	38	40	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	77
31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	62	64	66	68	70
44	47	50	52	55	58	61	64	66	69	72	75	77	80	83	86	88	91	94	97	99
21	22	23	25	26	27	29	30	31	33	34	35	36	38	39	40	42	43	44	46	47
47	50	53	56	58	61	64	67	70	73	76	79	82	85	88	91	94	96	99	102	105
41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	61	63	66	69	71	74	76	79	81	84	86	89	91
28	30	31	33	35	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	50	52	54	56	57	59	61	62
43	45	48	51	53	56	59	62	64	67	70	72	75	78	80	83	86	88	91	94	96
36	38	40	42	45	47	49	51	54	56	58	60	62	65	67	69	71	74	76	78	80
41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	61	63	66	69	71	74	76	79	81	84	86	89	91
29	31	32	34	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	51	52	54	56	58	60	61	63	65
28	30	31	33	35	36	38	40	42	43	45	47	49	50	52	54	56	57	59	61	62
21	22	23	25	26	27	29	30	31	33	34	35	36	38	39	40	42	43	44	46	47
37	39	41	43	46	48	50	53	55	57	59	62	64	66	68	71	73	75	78	80	82
28	30	32	34	35	37	39	41	42	44	46	48	49	51	53	55	57	58	60	62	64
25	27	28	30	31	33	34	36	38	39	41	42	44	45	47	48	50	52	53	55	56
33	35	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	65	67	69	71	73	75
37	39	41	43	46	48	50	53	55	57	59	62	64	66	68	71	73	75	78	80	82
37	39	41	43	46	48	50	53	55	57	59	62	64	66	68	71	73	75	78	80	82
44	47	50	52	55	58	61	64	66	69	72	75	77	80	83	86	88	91	94	97	99

The following chart is a guide to the number of servings obtained from one pound of meat in some of the more popular cuts and types.

Average Number of Servings From One Pound  
of Different Retail Cuts of Meat and Poultry\*

Meat Cut	Servings Per Pound	Meat Cut	Servings Per Pound
<b>Beef</b>			
Sirloin steak	2 1/2	Pork, Fresh	
Porterhouse, T-bone,		Center cut or rib chops	4
Rib steak	2	Loin or rib roasts	2 1/2
Round steak	3 1/2	Ham roast	2 1/2
Flank steak	4	Boston butt, bone-in	3
Chuck steak	2	Boston butt, boneless	4
Chuck roast, bone-in	2	Blade steak	3
Rib roast, boneless	2 1/2	Spareribs	1-1/3
Chuck roast, boneless	3	Liver	5
Rib roast, bone-in	2		
Rump roast, Sirloin			
roast	3	Pork, Cured	
Ground beef	4	Picnic:	
Short ribs	2	bone-in	2
Heart, liver or kidney	5	boneless	3
Tongue	3	canned	5
Frankfurters	4	center slice	3
Stew meat, boneless	5	Ham, ready-to-eat:	
Dried, chipped	8	bone-in	3 1/2
<b>Lamb</b>		boneless	5
Loin, rib or shoulder		shankless	4 1/4
chops	3	center slice	5
Breast and shank	2	Ham, cook-before-eating:	
Shoulder roast	2 1/2	bone-in	2 1/2
Leg of lamb	3	boneless	3 1/2
Stew meat, boneless	5	shankless	3

\*From 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 ounces of cooked, lean meat is considered a standard serving.

### How To Figure Cost Per Serving

Suppose beef is to be the main dish for the evening meal, but the shopper is not sure of the cut of beef she wants. From her knowledge of the yield of cooked lean from different cuts, she could compare the economy of the cuts of beef by figuring the cost per serving.

For example:

short ribs at 59¢/lb. divided by 1 serving/lb. = 59¢/ serving

blade chuck roast at 79¢/lb. divided by 2 servings/lb. =

39.5¢/serving

round steak at 99¢/lb. divided by 3 servings/lb. = 33 ¢/serving  
boneless rump roast at \$1.19¢/lb. divided by 4 servings/lb. =  
30 ¢/serving

In this case, the boneless rump roast is the most economical choice for the main dish.

Using the same system, it is possible to compare the cost per serving of different types of meat.

spare ribs at 59¢/lb. divided by 1 1/3 servings = 44.4¢/serving

chicken legs and thighs at 59¢/lb. divided by 3 servings =  
20 ¢/serving

chuck roast at 69¢/lb. divided by 2 servings = 34.4¢/serving

fish fillets at 69¢/lb. divided by 3 servings = 23 ¢/serving

leg of lamb at 79¢/lb. divided by 3 servings = 26.3 ¢/serving

boneless ham at 99¢/lb. divided by 5 servings = 19.8 ¢/serving

When a shopper makes the kind of cost per serving comparisons in the above examples, it becomes clear which meat choice will be the most economical. Often, the food with the highest cost per pound is actually the most economical.

Using the chart on pages 4 and 5, it's easy to compare costs. A few minutes spent using the chart to compare the cost per serving of a week's meat specials can save considerable food money. Variety in meal planning will not be sacrificed for economy's sake simply because the homemaker is likely to find that cost per serving for a number of different meats will be quite similar.

## Ways To Cut Costs

There are a number of things the budget conscious homemaker can do to cut the cost of meat for her family. She can:

- 1) Buy from cuts and types of meat, fish, or poultry which give the most cooked lean for the money.
- 2) Learn to prepare them properly and in a number of different ways, keeping in mind that cooking at low to moderate temperatures reduces loss to shrinkage and evaporation, leaving more meat to serve.
- 3) Check the specials and read the newspaper ads. Cuts which are usually too expensive may be within the budget when on special.
- 4) Use small servings of meat and rely on less expensive foods from the other three food groups to complete the meal. Try to serve meat at least once a day.

Remember, the Basic Four Food Plan recommends two servings from the meat group each day so supplement with meat alternates such as eggs, dry peas and beans, peanut butter, and cheese.